Checklist of the Butterflies of Algonquin Provincial Park

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Cover Photo: Tiger Swallowtail

Checklist of the Butterflies of Algonquin Provincial Park

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by John D. Reynolds

Abstract

The 77 species of butterflies recorded from Algonquin Provincial Park are listed with comments concerning their abundance, habitats, and seasonal occurrence. Several species reach either their northern or southern range limits for Ontario in the Park.

Introduction

Algonquin Provincial Park occupies 7571 km² in northern Haliburton County and the District of Nipissing in central Ontario. It is composed of two general forest types. The west side is characterized by tolerant hardwoods growing on glacial till at elevations of 400-490 m above sea level. On the east side coniferous forests growing on glacial outwash deposits at elevations as low as 180 m above sea level are typical. Throughout the Park there are numerous lakes, beaver ponds, and spruce bogs.

Incidental to the long recreational and scientific use that has been made of Algonquin Park, considerable information has accumulated concerning its butterflies. The present list is a synthesis of my own and previous observations.

Methods

Extensive field work by C.J. Durden in 1955 and 1956, and D.J. Dunlop from 1959 to 1961 resulted in the publication of an unannotated list of Algonquin's butterflies in 1967. Their original notes and specimens at the Park Museum are the basis of this annotated list, supplemented by subsequent collections and observations by other members of the naturalist staff of the Park Museum and many other contributors. Information was also obtained from specimens in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), from reports by members of the Toronto Entomologists' Association in the annual Summaries of Lepidoptera Encountered in Ontario (1969-1981), and from R.W. Knapton for 1980 and 1981. My own observations and collections were made over a five year period, from 1977 to 1981.

Results and Discussion

Several factors influence butterfly distributions in Algonquin Park. The boreal element in Algonquin's vegetation is responsible for the presence of several typically northern species such as Bog Fritillaries, Jutta Arctics, and Macoun's Arctics.

Another important factor has been the influence of man. Originally, natural forest fires would have been the most important factor responsible for creating open areas (Martin 1959). Many of our skippers, whites, and sulphurs were probably largely restricted to these areas as well as to meadows in former beaver ponds. After an initial increase in the incidence of forest fires associated with man's early logging activities, forest fires have been greatly suppressed since the 1930's. Today most of the 'fields' mentioned in the annotations refer to openings created by logging and recreational activities since the early 1900's. Although such clearings comprise only a small percentage of the total Park area, they appear

to be very important for many species of butterflies. An example is the old airfield at km 30.6 along Highway 60. This field is characterized by early successional species of plants typical of well drained areas in Algonquin, such as bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) blueberry (*Vaccinium* spp.), poverty grass (*Danthonia spicata*), and orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*). Here large numbers of Dreamy Dusky Wings, Silvery Blues, and Chryxus Arctics may be seen in late May. Later in the summer these species are typically replaced by European Skippers, Pink Edged and Common Sulphurs, Atlantis Fritillaries and Laurentian Skippers. With the possible exception of Atlantis Fritillaries, these species appear to be dependent upon such open habitats, which rarely occur naturally.

To date, 77 species of butterflies have been recorded from Algonquin Park. Sixty-eight of these (two of which are represented by two forms) are supported by specimens in the collection of the Algonquin Park Museum or the Royal Ontario Museum. I have been unable to locate supporting specimens for the remaining 9 species; they are presented in a separate list at the end.

The scientific names and the order of presentation follow Miller and Brown (1981); common names follow Klots (1951). Unless noted otherwise, the nominate subspecies of each butterfly occurs in the Park.

The frequencies of occurrence (e.g. 'common') illustrate species status in typical years. Some species undergo fluctuations in their numbers from one year to the next. These differences are probably related to variations in weather. Ranges of abundance (e.g. 'rare to uncommon') are given to indicate such year-to-year variations.

The time of ocurrence of each species also varies from year to year. Some butterflies undoubtedly occur in low numbers at times other than those given, and have thus far been overlooked.

Although the well-travelled parts of Algonquin such as the Highway 60 area have received considerable attention, records from elsewhere in the Park are at present rather sparse. Any further information concerning the butterflies of Algonquin Park would be welcomed at the Algonquin Park Museum, Ministry of Natural Resources, Box 219, Whitney, Ontario K0J 2M0.

Superfamily **Hesperioidea** **Skippers**
Family **Hesperiidae** **Skippers**

Northern Cloudy Wing (*Thorybes pylades* Scudder)
Rare; fields and roadsides; June.

Dreamy Dusky Wing (*Erynnis icelus* Scudder & Burgess)
Common; dry clearings and roadsides; mid-May to July.

Juvenal's Dusky Wing (*Erynnis juvenalis* Fabricius)
Uncommon; dry clearings and roadsides; mid-May to early July.

Arctic Skipper (*Carterocephalus palaemon mandan* Edwards)
Common; grassy clearings and wet meadows; late May to June.

Least Skipper (*Ancyloxypha numitor* Fabricius)
Uncommon; fields and wet meadows; July to early August.

European Skipper (*Thymelicus lineola* Ochsenheimer)
Common; fields and roadsides; late June to early August.

Laurentian Skipper (*Hesperia comma laurentina* Lyman)
Uncommon; fields and roadsides; late July to September. Although this northern species appears to be well established in Algonquin, it has yet to be recorded in the Ottawa region, 150 km to the east of the Park (Layberry et al. 1982).

Leonardus Skipper (*Hesperia leonardus* Harris)
Uncommon; roadsides; August.

Peck's Skipper (*Polites coras* Cramer)
Uncommon; fields and roadsides; mid-June to early August.

Tawny Edged Skipper (*Polites themistocles* Latreille)
Uncommon; fields and roadsides; mid-June to early August.

Long Dash (*Polites mystic* Edwards)
Uncommon; fields and roadsides; mid-June to early August.

Hobomok Skipper (*Poanes hobomok* Harris) (*Poanes hobomok f. pocahontas* Scudder)
Common; fields and roadsides along the edges of woods; late May to July.

Two Spotted Skipper (*Euphyes bimacula* Grote & Robinson)
Extremely rare. We have one verified record 5 July 1978, Davies Bog, Hwy. 60. This southern species is rare and extremely local in Ottawa (Layberry et al. 1982).

Dun Skipper (*Euphyes ruricola metacomet* Harris)
Uncommon to common; fields and roadsides; June to early August.

Pepper and Salt Skipper (*Amblyscirtes hegon* Scudder)
Uncommon; roadsides; late May to June.

Roadside Skipper (*Amblyscirtes vialis* Edwards)
Uncommon; roadsides; late May to June.

Superfamily Papilionoidea True Butterflies

Family Papilionidae Swallowtails

Tiger Swallowtail (*Pterourus glaucus canadensis* Rothschild & Jordan)
Abundant; any open area; mid-May to mid-July

Family Pieridae Whites and Sulphurs

Mustard White (*Artogeia napi oleracea* Harris)
Uncommon; fields and roadsides; late May to August.

European Cabbage Butterfly (*Artogeia rapae* Linnaeus)
Uncommon; fields and roadsides; mid-May to early September.

Common Sulphur (*Colias philodice* Godart) (*Colias philodice* var *alba* Strecker)
Common; fields and roadsides; late May to September.

Alfalfa Butterfly (*Colias eurytheme* Boisduval)
Uncommon; fields and roadsides; July to August.

Pink Edged Sulphur (*Colias interior* Scudder)
Common; fields, roadsides and bogs; June to mid-August.

Little Sulphur (*Pyrisitia lisa* Boisduval & LeConte)
Extremely rare. There is one record for 14 July 1959, Source Lake. This southern migrant occasionally erupts northward into Ontario. There are a few records for Ottawa (Layberry et al. 1982).

Family Lycaenidae Gossamer Wings

Harvester (*Feniseca tarquinius* Fabricius)
Rare and local; alder thickets; mid-May to June.

American Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas americana* Harris)
Rare; fields and roadsides; mid-June to August.

Bog Copper (*Epidemia epixanthe michiganensis* Rawson)
Rare to common; bogs; July to mid-August.

Coral Hairstreak (*Harkenclenus titus* Fabricius)
Rare; fields and roadsides; August.

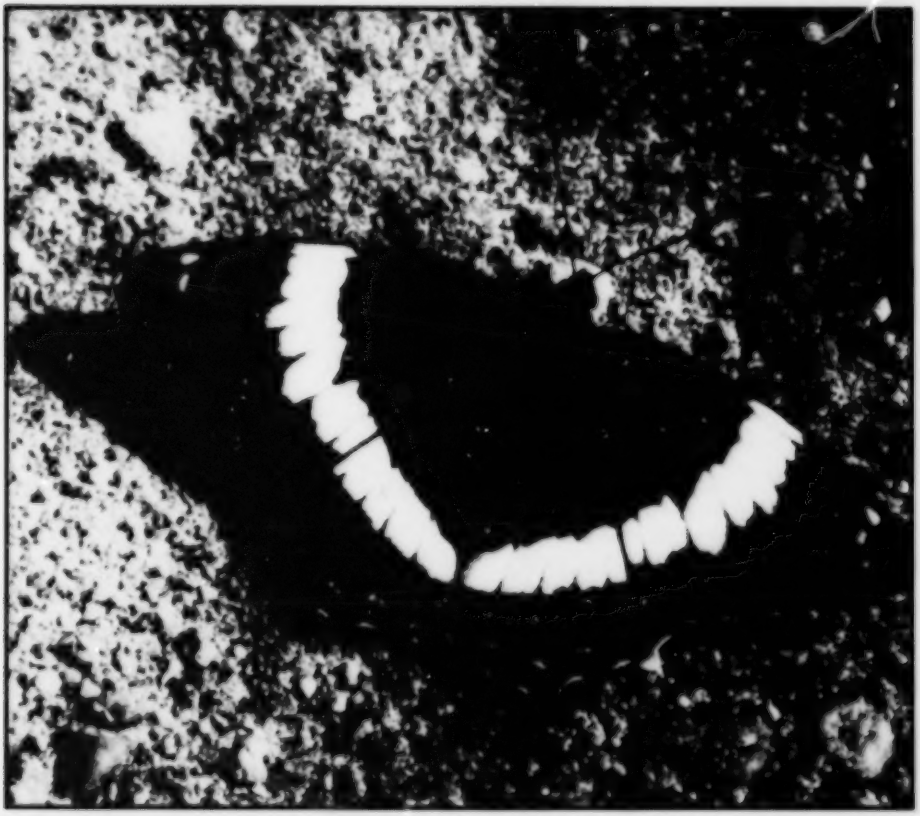
Striped Hairstreak (*Satyrium liparops strigosum* Harris)
Rare; fields and roadsides; July.

Brown Elfin (*Incisalia augustinus* Westwood)
Uncommon; clearings in coniferous and mixed forests, bogs; May to mid-June.

Hoary Elfin (*Incisalia polios* Cook & Watson)
Uncommon; dry clearings in coniferous and mixed forests; May to early June.

Eastern Pine Elfin (*Incisalia niphon clarki* Freeman)
Rare; dry clearings in coniferous and mixed forests; mid-May to early June.

Western Pine Elfin (*Incisalia eryphon* Boisduval)
Uncommon; dry clearings in coniferous and mixed forests; mid-May to early June. Algonquin is at the eastern range limit of this species in Ontario; it has yet to be recorded from Ottawa (Layberry et al. 1982).



White Admiral

Gray Hairstreak (*Strymon melinus humuli* Harris)
Rare; dry fields and roadsides; late May to June. This species reaches its northern range limit in Ontario in Algonquin Park. It is rare in Ottawa (Layberry et al. 1982).

Early Hairstreak (*Erora laeta* Edwards)
Rare; edges of sugar maple-beech forests; mid-May to mid-June. This is a rare butterfly in the province as a whole, typically found in the vicinity of beech trees, its presumed foodplant. We have three records from the Hwy. 60 area.

Spring Azure (*Celastrina ladon* Cramer)
Common; fields and roadsides; May to June, rare to early August.

Silvery Blue (*Glaucopsyche lygdamus couperi* Grote)
Common; fields and roadsides; mid-May to early July.

Saepiolus Blue (*Plebejus saepiolus amica* Edwards)
Rare; fields and roadsides; June to July. This species reaches its southern range limit in Ontario in the vicinity of Algonquin.

Great Spangled Fritillary (*Speyeria cybele* Fabricius)
Uncommon to common; fields, roadsides and wet meadows; July to early September.

Aphrodite (*Speyeria aphrodite winni* Gunder)
Uncommon to common; fields, roadsides and wet meadows; mid-July to August.

Atlantis Fritillary (*Speyeria atlantis* Edwards)
Abundant; fields, roadsides and wet meadows; late June to early September.

Bog Fritillary (*Proclossiana eunomia dawsoni* Barnes & McDunnough)
Uncommon and local; bogs; June to early July. This boreal species approaches its southern range limit in Algonquin.

Silver Bordered Fritillary (*Clossiana selene atrocostalis* Huard)
Uncommon; fields, roadsides and wet meadows; late May to August.

Silvery Checkerspot (*Charidryas nycteis* Doubleday & Hewitson)
Uncommon and local; dry clearings and roadsides; mid-June to mid-July.

Harris' Checkerspot (*Charidryas harrisii* Scudder)
Uncommon and local; wet meadows and roadsides; mid-June to mid-July.

Pearl Crescent (*Phyciodes tharos* Drury)
Rare; fields and roadsides; mid-June to August.

Tawny Crescent (*Phyciodes batesii* Reakirt)
Extremely rare; fields and roadsides; late June to early July.

Question Mark (*Polygonia interrogationis* Fabricius)
Uncommon; fields and roadsides; June to August.

Comma (*Polygonia comma* Harris)
Uncommon; forest clearings and roadsides; late April to mid-August.

Satyr Angle Wing (*Polygonia satyrus* Edwards)
Extremely rare; forest clearings; July. This northern species is rare in Ottawa (Layberry et al. 1982), and approaches its southern range limit in Ontario in the Algonquin-Ottawa area.

Green Comma (*Polygonia faunus* Edwards)
Uncommon to common; forest clearings, fields and roadsides; late April to September.

Gray Comma (*Polygonia progne* Cramer)
Rare; forest clearings and roadsides; June to early August.

Compton Tortoise Shell (*Nymphalis vau-album j-album* Boisduval & LeConte)
Uncommon to common; forest clearings and roadsides; late April to May, July to September.

Mourning Cloak (*Nymphalis antiopa* Linnaeus)
Uncommon; forest clearings and roadsides; May to June, mid-July to mid-October.

Milbert's Tortoise Shell (*Aglais milberti* Godart)
Uncommon; forest clearings and roadsides; mid-May to August.

American Painted Lady (*Vanessa virginiensis* Drury)
Rare to abundant; fields and roadsides; mid-May to September. This species frequently migrates north to Algonquin and can be one of our most conspicuous butterflies throughout the summer. This was the case in 1981, for instance. By contrast, it was not recorded at all in 1980.

Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui* Linnaeus)
Rare; fields and roadsides; August. This species only rarely migrates north into Algonquin. In contrast to the American Painted Lady, it was not recorded in the Park in 1981.

Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta rubria* Fruhstorfer)
Rare to abundant; fields and roadsides; late May to mid-October. Like the American Painted Lady, this migrant can be abundant some years (e.g. 1981), and absent others (e.g. 1980).

White Admiral (*Basilarchia arthemis* Drury)
Abundant; fields and roadsides; mid-June to early September.

Viceroy (*Basilarchia archippus* Cramer)
Rare; fields and roadsides; late June to early September.

Family Satyridae Satyrs and Wood Nymphs

Northern Pearly Eye (*Enodia anthedon* Clark)
Uncommon; deciduous forests and clearings; late June to early August.

Eyed Brown (*Satyrodes eurydice* Johansson)
Uncommon; fields and roadsides; early June to mid-August.

Little Wood Satyr (*Megisto cymela* Cramer)
Uncommon; deciduous forests and clearings; June to mid-July.

Inornate Ringlet (*Coenonympha inornata* Edwards)
Uncommon to common; fields and roadsides; mid-July to early September.

Northern Wood Nymph (*Cercyonis pegala nephele* Kirby)
Uncommon to common; fields and forest edges; mid-July to early September.

Macoun's Arctic (*Oeneis macounii* Edwards)
Rare(?); Jack Pine forests; June. Two specimens of this boreal species were collected at L. Traverse in 1956. Another was collected within 2 km of the intersection of the hydro line and the Bonnechère R. (P.M. Catling, pers. comm.). These east side records constitute the southernmost records for this species in Ontario. There are extensive tracts of Jack Pine forests on the east side which are rarely visited by collectors. More field work could prove this species (which only flies in even-numbered years) to be more common than our records indicate.

Chryxus Arctic (*Oeneis chryxus strigulosa* McDunnough)
Common to locally abundant; dry fields and roadsides; mid-May to mid-June. In years when this species is common, males conspicuously defend small mating territories in dry, open areas (Dunlop 1962, Knapton 1985). Females visit these aggregations to mate, and then fly off to lay their eggs.

Jutta Arctic (*Oeneis jutta ascerta* Masters & Sorenson)
Uncommon to common, local; bogs (among black spruces); June to mid-July. This species approaches its southernmost range limit in Ontario in the Algonquin-Ottawa area.

Family **Danaidae** **Milkweed Butterflies**

Monarch (*Danaus plexippus* Linnaeus)
Common to abundant; fields and roadsides; mid-June to mid-September.

The following are species which have been reported from the Park but which are not substantiated by known specimens:

Persius Dusky Wing (*Erynnis persius* Scudder)
Indian Skipper (*Hesperia sassacus* Boisduval & LeConte)
Northern Broken Dash (*Wallengrenia egeremet* Scudder)
Acadian Hairstreak (*Satyrium acadica* Edwards)
Eastern Tailed Blue (*Everes comyntas* Godart)
Variegated Fritillary (*Euptoieta claudia* Cramer)
Meadow Fritillary (*Clossiana bellona toddi* Holland)
Hoary Comma (*Polygonia gracilis* Grote & Robinson)
Buckeye (*Junonia coenia* Hubner)

Viceroy

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Other Algonquin Park Publications

This technical bulletin is only one of many publications published in cooperation with the Ministry of Natural Resources by The Friends of Algonquin Park. The Friends is a registered charitable organization with a volunteer board of directors and was established in 1983 to assist the Park with its educational and interpretive programs.

The following is a list of official Park publications available at The Friends' two bookstores (located at the Park Museum and the Pioneer Logging Exhibit) or by writing to the address below.

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